

**IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
FOR THE NORTHERN DISTRICT OF IOWA
CEDAR RAPIDS DIVISION**

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA,

Plaintiff,

vs.

RICARDO WATKINS,

Defendant.

No. CR99-0073-LRR

ORDER

This matter is before the court pursuant to the defendant's motion to reduce sentence under 18 U.S.C. § 3582(c)(2) (docket no. 360). The defendant filed such motion on November 21, 2011.¹

In relevant part, 18 U.S.C. § 3582(c) provides:

The court may not modify a term of imprisonment once it has been imposed except that . . . in the case of a defendant who has been sentenced to a term of imprisonment based on a sentencing range that has subsequently been lowered by the Sentencing Commission pursuant to 28 U.S.C. [§] 994(o), upon motion of the defendant or the Director of the Bureau of Prisons, or on its own motion, the court may reduce the term of imprisonment, after considering the factors set forth in [18 U.S.C. §] 3553(a) to the extent that they are applicable, if such a reduction is consistent with applicable policy statements issued by the Sentencing Commission.

¹ The court notes that, with respect to Amendment 706 and Amendment 715, the court determined that they did not impact the defendant's guideline range. Consequently, in 2008, the court concluded that a reduction under 18 U.S.C. §3582(c)(2) was not authorized.

18 U.S.C. § 3582(c)(2); *see also United States v. Auman*, 8 F.3d 1268, 1271 (8th Cir. 1993) (“Section 3582(c)(2) is a provision that permits a district court to reduce a term of imprisonment if the sentencing range upon which the term was based is subsequently lowered by the Sentencing Commission.”). Given the record, the court concludes that it need not appoint counsel or conduct a hearing with respect to the defendant’s motion under 18 U.S.C. § 3582(c)(2). *See United States v. Harris*, 568 F.3d 666, 669 (8th Cir. 2009) (concluding that there is no right to assistance of counsel when pursuing relief under 18 U.S.C. § 3582(c) and finding that a judge need not hold a hearing on a motion pursuant to 18 U.S.C. § 3582(c)); *see also Fed. R. Crim. P. 43(b)(4)* (stating that a defendant’s presence is not required in a proceeding that involves the reduction of a sentence under 18 U.S.C. § 3582(c)).

Amendment 750 (Parts A and C only) amends USSG §1B1.10. On June 30, 2011, the Sentencing Commission unanimously voted to apply Amendment 750 (Parts A and C only) retroactively to cocaine base (“crack”) offenses, and it set November 1, 2011 as the date that Amendment 750 (Parts A and C only) could be applied retroactively. Part A amended the Drug Quantity Table in USSG §2D1.1 for crack offenses and made related revisions to Application Note 10 to USSG §2D1.1. Part C deleted the cross reference in USSG §2D2.1(b) under which an offender who possessed more than 5 grams of crack was sentenced under USSG §2D1.1.

USSG §1B1.10, in relevant part, states:

In a case in which a defendant is serving a term of imprisonment, and the guideline range applicable to that defendant has subsequently been lowered as a result of an amendment to the Guidelines Manual listed in subsection (c) below, the court may reduce the defendant’s term of imprisonment as provided by 18 U.S.C. § 3582(c)(2). As required by 18 U.S.C. § 3582(c)(2), any such reduction in the defendant’s term of imprisonment shall be consistent with this policy statement.

USSG §1B1.10(a)(1); *see also* USSG §1B1.10, comment. (n.1) (“Eligibility for consideration under 18 U.S.C. § 3582(c)(2) is triggered only by an amendment listed in subsection (c) that lowers the applicable guideline range.”). The Sentencing Commission included Amendment 750 (Parts A and C only) within subsection (c). USSG §1B1.10(c).

Nevertheless, the court is unable to rely on Amendment 750 (Parts A and C only) to reduce the defendant’s sentence under 18 U.S.C. § 3582(c)(2) and USSG §1B1.10. *See generally United States v. Curry*, 584 F.3d 1102, 1104 (8th Cir. 2009) (discussing *United States v. Wyatt*, 115 F.3d 606, 608-09 (8th Cir. 1997)) (explaining requirements under USSG §1B1.10(b)). Based on a total adjusted offense level of 43 and a criminal history category of III, the court previously determined the defendant’s guideline range to be life imprisonment. The court sentenced the defendant to life imprisonment on count 1 of the superseding indictment and 240 months imprisonment on count 3 of the superseding indictment. Here, a total adjusted offense level of 43 and a criminal history category of III results in a guideline range of life imprisonment.² Because the applicable guideline range is the same as the original guideline range, the defendant is not entitled to a reduction of his life sentence. *See* USSG §1B1.10(a)(2)(B) (“A reduction . . . is not authorized under 18 U.S.C. § 3582(c)(2) if . . . an amendment listed in subsection (c) does not have the effect of lowering the defendant’s applicable guideline range.”); USSG §1B1.10, comment. (n.1) (making clear that a reduction is not authorized under 18 U.S.C. § 3582(c)(2) if an amendment in subsection (c) is applicable to the defendant but the

² At the defendant’s sentencing, the court applied USSG §2D1.1(c) to arrive at a base offense level of 38, added four levels under USSG §3B1.1(a), added two levels under USSG §3B1.4 and added two levels under USSG §3C1.1. Given a total offense level of 46, the court utilized USSG Ch. 5, Pt. A, comment. (n.2) to arrive at a total adjusted offense level of 43. The total adjusted offense level is once again 43 because the court held the defendant responsible for 3.5 kilograms of crack, which results in a base offense level of 36 under USSG §2D1.1(c). Prior to November 1, 2011, level 36 included at least 1.5 kilograms but less than 4.5 kilograms of crack. It now includes at least 2.8 kilograms but less than 8.4 kilograms of crack.

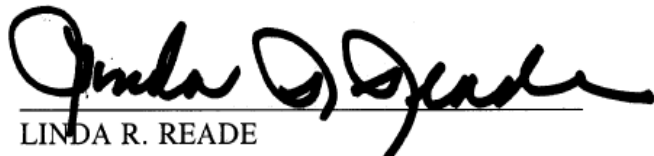
amendment does not have the effect of lowering the defendant's applicable guideline range); *see also United States v. Roa-Medina*, 607 F.3d 255, 260-61 (1st Cir. 2010) (holding that a sentence reduction under 18 U.S.C. § 3582(c)(2) was not available because the amendment does not have the effect of lowering the defendant's applicable guideline range); *United States v. Spells*, 322 Fed. App'x 171, 173 (3d Cir. 2009) (rejecting the argument that a decrease in the base offense level gave the district court authority to reduce a sentence when there was no change in the applicable sentencing range); *United States v. Lindsey*, 556 F.3d 238, 242-46 (4th Cir. 2009) (concluding that the defendant could not rely on 18 U.S.C. § 3582(c)(2) because the amendment does not have the effect of lowering the applicable guideline range); *United States v. Caraballo*, 552 F.3d 6, 10-12 (1st Cir. 2008) (holding that a defendant must establish that an amended guideline has the effect of lowering the sentencing range actually used at his or her sentencing in order to engage the gears of 18 U.S.C. § 3582(c)(2)); *United States v. McFadden*, 523 F.3d 839, 840-41 (8th Cir. 2008) (concluding that, unless the applicable sentencing range changes, a reduction in the base offense level does not allow for a sentence reduction); *United States v. Gonzalez-Balderas*, 105 F.3d 981, 984 (5th Cir. 1997) (finding that, although the amendment did lower the defendant's offense level, the district court did not err when it summarily denied the defendant's motion under 18 U.S.C. § 3582(c)(2) because the amended guideline range remained the same). Accordingly, the court concludes that a reduction under 18 U.S.C. § 3582(c)(2) and USSG §1B1.10 is not warranted.

The defendant's motion to reduce sentence under 18 U.S.C. § 3582(c)(2) (docket

no. 360) is denied. The clerk's office is directed to provide a copy of this order to the United States, the defendant and the Federal Public Defender.

IT IS SO ORDERED.

DATED this 2nd day of December, 2011.



LINDA R. READE
CHIEF JUDGE, U.S. DISTRICT COURT
NORTHERN DISTRICT OF IOWA